

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MINUTES



February 23, 2022

12:30pm

Virtual Meeting

Call to Order: 12:32pm

10. Roll Call

Commissioners Present:

Dennie Conrad
Tyler Jasper
Kim Parducci
Peggy Penland
Jared Pulver
Suzanne Schroeder
Jason Stranberg
Paige West

Commissioners Absent:

Jay Harland, excused

Council Liaison Present:

Councilmember Mike Zarosinski

Staff Present:

Karl MacNair, Public Works Engineering
Debra Royal, Public Works Engineering
Liz Hamblin, Planning

10.1 Introduction of Transportation Commission Members

Mr. MacNair invited the new commissioners, Mr. Jasper and Mr. Stranberg, to introduce themselves. Mr. Jasper is the liaison to the Transportation Commission from the Parking Committee and Mr. Stranberg is the liaison to the Transportation Commission from TRADCO.

10.2 Election of Officers

Motion: Commissioner Dennie Conrad to be named Chair of the Transportation Commission.

Moved by: Kim Parducci Seconded by: Jason Stranberg

Roll Call: The Motion was agreed to unanimously.

Motion carried and so ordered.

Motion: Commissioner Tyler Jasper be named Vice Chair of the Transportation Commission.

Moved by: Tyler Jasper Seconded by: Jared Pulver

Roll Call: The Motion was agreed to unanimously.

Motion carried and so ordered.

20. Approval of Minutes from December 15, 2021

Minor edits were made to Commissioner West's comments. There were no other additions or corrections, and the minutes were approved as presented.

30. Oral Requests and Communications from the Audience

Mr. MacNair shared that four emails were received regarding Hoover Elementary requesting sidewalks along Modoc Avenue. Three emails were from teachers and one was from PTO President Michelle Adkinson. The request has been put on the Public Works list of sidewalk prioritization that will be discussed during the next agenda item. The four emails have been sent a response.

40. Action Items

40.1 Safe Routes to Schools Grant Project Recommendation

Mr. MacNair discussed this ODOT open grant opportunity. State funds are distributed every two years for construction projects that contribute to the safety of walking and biking to schools. The focus of these grant awards are Title I schools, readiness and safety, roadways with more traffic, and proximity to K-8 schools. The maximum request is \$2M and the local match is either 20% or 40%. Title I schools and priority safety corridor schools are always a 20% match. This round, the City is at the 20% matching criteria.

We want to leverage the \$1M Public Works recently received from the American Rescue Plan and focus where there is existing curb, gutter, drainage, asphalt, so we can build more linear feet of

sidewalk. We are asking the Commission to endorse the recommendation that we use the \$1M as matching funds, and we request the maximum \$2M from Safe Routes to School. The projects on the priority list that the Commission approved in August of 2021 for the American Rescue Plan funding was presented.

Commissioner Suzanne Schroeder asked about the width of sidewalks. Mr. MacNair discussed how the varying rights-of-way dictate sidewalk widths. If there is room for a planter strip, a five foot wide sidewalk would be installed. If there is no room for a planer strip, a seven foot sidewalk is installed.

Commissioner Kim Parducci asked if all the sidewalks on the list would be completed in the 2023-24 time period and what is the prioritization. Mr. MacNair said the funding will be available in the 2023 and 2024 calendar years, but actual construction could reach into 2025. In particular, Commissioner Parducci asked about the timing of the sidewalks near Hoover Elementary. She described the safety challenges that surround the school at dismissal times. She also said that Hoover does not have funding sources for these types of projects other than the PTO. Mr. MacNair said the City does not have a “quick response” program for sidewalks. Mr. MacNair said that the list is helpful as it contains projects from all over the City and they will be put forward as one project so a higher score could be obtained.

Commissioner Jason Stranberg asked for context on how projects are evaluated to gets on the list. Mr. MacNair explained that locations make it onto the list from various sources; requests from citizens, BPAC, a Sidewalk Bond, and staff suggestions. Projects on the list were then prioritized using a scoring system. BPAC and the Commission provided feedback on the scoring system.

Commissioner Tyler Jasper asked for clarification on the Modoc projects. Mr. MacNair said Modoc south of Siskiyou will be added to the sidewalk request list. Since that segment does not have existing curb and gutter, which is a prerequisite for the ARPA list, it would not be part of the SRTS grant. The general sidewalk request list does not have prerequisites. Commissioner Jasper asked if a study can be done to see if there is something else that can be done like a crossing sign on troublesome corners. Mr. MacNair offered that there are specific state laws about what signs can be installed and where. Without a designated crosswalk in the area, no school signage can be installed. Signs are intended to indicate where a crosswalk is and that it is a school zone. School zones are 200 feet on either side of the school property. That area is far enough away from the school that it does not meet the requirements. Commissioner Jasper asked if there are any other solutions that might give teachers and parents’ piece of mind if sidewalks can’t be installed in the next few years. Mr. MacNair offered that a false sense of safety is not something the City would want to do. Short of building a sidewalk along this section, there is not really anything that can be done to provide an actual safety improvement.

Commissioner Parducci asked why the crosswalk at Delwood and Black Oak was removed. Mr. MacNair said the school no longer provides a crossing guard, therefore it is no longer an official school

crossing. The school was consulted on this decision before the crosswalk was removed, and they did not feel it was safe enough to place a crossing guard there even though the sight distance was verified and found adequate at the time.

Commissioner Peggy Penland offered that on a monthly basis, the Traffic Coordinating Committee sees four to five of these types of requests and everything in between. It is frustration that the City can't fix them all. A lot of work goes into researching and creating these priority lists. They are continually added to, so the Commission should feel confident in what has been presented.

Mr. MacNair asked for a motion to endorse the prioritization list of projects staff has identified to be included in the Safe Routes to School grant application.

Motion: That the Transportation Commission endorse the grant application for the proposed sidewalk infill project based on the prioritized list from the ARPA funding.

Moved by: Peggy Penland Seconded by: Kim Parducci

Roll Call: The Motion was agreed to unanimously.

Motion carried and so ordered.

40.2 RVMPO Call for Projects Recommendation

Mr. MacNair shared with the Commission that the Rogue Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (RVMPO) has an open call for projects for federal funds.

Every three years, federal funds are available that RVMPO distributes throughout the region. The funds are passed through the state to the MPO. Jurisdictions submit their top projects. There is a scoring process that goes through various committees at the RVMPO. A final list is then recommended to RVMPO's Policy Committee and those projects receive the funding.

Projects for this source of funds are recommended to be at least \$1M because the requirements of federal funds to make smaller projects are difficult to deliver. The match requirement is 10.27%. All of the projects that are on the recommended additional projects list that the Commission put together in 2020 are good projects for this. As a reminder, in 2020, the Commission did a lot of work creating the Six-Year Capital Improvement Plan for transportation projects. It was then adopted by Council. Included in the Six-Year Plan were four projects that were not fully funded and there was \$3M set aside as matching funds to pursue grant applications. Those four projects were 1) Table Rock Road (from Merriman to I-5), 2) Delta Waters Road (from Nome Court to Bedford Circle), 3) Stewart Avenue (from Lozier Lane to Dixie Lane), and 4) the intersection of Highland Drive and Barnett Road adding an additional northbound right turn lane.

The City submitted both the Table Rock and Highland Drive project for earmark requests as part of the federal infrastructure bill. They were submitted as part of the appropriations portion of the bill that has not yet been passed.

The sidewalks along Table Rock Road that were identified as part of this have been budgeted separately. RVMPO has not yet told the City how much funding is available for this round. The last round was about \$8.4M.

The request to the Commission is to recommend projects either from this list or if commissioners would like to request additional projects, that can be done. However, staff recommends the Commission stays with this list. In addition, we will also be requesting matching funds for a street sweeper that is expected to cost around \$350K.

Commissioner Jasper asked staff if they have a ranking of the projects. Mr. MacNair said that they do not, that they were all high priority when the Six-Year Plan was created. The Commission has previously identified Table Rock as a top priority. One down-side with Table Rock for this particular grant is the \$6M cost, which would be a significant amount of the funding available for the region. Mr. MacNair added that the number of projects that can be submitted is not limited.

Commissioner Jasper asked if there is a strategy behind the number of projects the City should submit. Mr. John Vial shared that applying for multiple projects does not hurt the City's changes of being awarded the grant, but the scoring committee will come back to the City and ask for our priorities.

Commissioner Penland shared her thoughts about Table Rock Road. She discussed that over the years, many homes have been built next to I-5 and the children are continually put in danger crossing Table Rock Road with its speeding traffic, morning fog, and without street lights and sidewalks. Commissioner Penland has been asking for this project for 26 years and it has not gotten any cheaper to construct since then. Children have been killed there on bikes in this area.

Commissioner Paige West concurs with Commissioner Penland and is very familiar with this grant and shared some insights into the extensive criteria and points system. Projects that will score higher are those that are near high-density and affordable housing, have bike and pedestrian infrastructure included, and that are near or connect to transit service. Of all of the projects, Commissioner West believes the Table Rock Road project would score the best out of the projects other cities will submit. She also reiterated the thoughts of the Commission from 2020, that this project should not be ranked low just because the cost is high. She encouraged the City to look at increasing the match on the project.

Commissioner Jared Pulver agreed with Commissioner West and Penland and said that all four projects should be submitted and Table Rock Road should be the top pick. He also asked for clarification

on why this grant would cover a street sweeper purchase. Mr. MacNair said it qualified because the Rogue Valley is in a PM10 area, which means there is a lot of dust particulates in the air. Street sweepers help to keep the road dust from being recirculated back into the air. Mr. Vial added that funding for street sweepers is a frequent request state-wide. The caveat is that the funds can only be used to add capacity for street sweeping not to replace existing equipment.

Commissioner Jasper suggested that two projects should be submitted with the priority being Table Rock Road. Commissioner Parducci agreed that Table Rock Road (project 447) is the priority project.

Mr. MacNair said staff would take the feedback from today, create a proposal, and bring it back to the Commission at the March meeting for discussion and a vote. The deadline for the grant application is May. Chair Dennie Conrad reiterated that Table Rock Road is the first propriety and Delta Waters is second.

Commissioner Jasper asked staff to provide ranking recommendations. He also asked for information he could review prior to the next meeting that gives background on the projects on the list.

50. Discussion Items

None.

60. Commission Remarks and Committee Reports

Commissioner Jasper shared that the Parking Committee was cancelled for February.

Commissioner Schroeder shared that BPAC met yesterday and that Carla Paladino of Planning presented a plan to streamline signage to direct pedestrians and cyclists to destinations within the City. The Wayfinding Committee is making new signs that will be more uniform, less redundant, and will include the Medford logo. A bike fix-it station was installed near the Bear Creek Greenway, but all the tools were stolen. There is now funds to replace the tools, but a discussion is underway to move the fit-it station to a more secure location. Public Works reported that the Foothill Road project goes out to bid in November, and Parks and Recreation provided an update on the Aquatic Center and they have created a master plan for Midway Park featuring a bike skills area.

Commissioner Penland reported that the Traffic Coordinating Committee we will meet tomorrow and will be discussing parking restrictions on Bennet Avenue.

70. Staff Reports

Mr. MacNair reported that the BUILD project (Foothill Road) project will go out to bid in November. Since the last meeting, Commissioner West interviewed BPAC applicants and those new members

started serving this month. Public Works is working on overlay restriping projects related to streets that will be overlaid this summer. Preparations are being made for the summer count season. This year will be tube counts, which gather the mainline volume of vehicles on the roads. In odd years, the number of vehicles making right or left turns are counted. Liberty Park sidewalk construction is ongoing. Follow-up from last meeting, ODOT is wrapping up their public input process on the Infrastructure and Jobs Act funding. There is still time to submit comments to ODOT.

80. Agenda Build

Call for projects agenda item will be revisited in March.

Restriping.

Information on the Exit 27 alternative mobility target and other updates to the Transportation System Plan related to ODOT interchanges.

Commissioner Parducci asked that background on the changes to the Transportation Planning Rule be provided in an upcoming meeting.

90. Adjournment – 1:53pm

Next Meeting – March 23

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Royal, Public Works Engineering